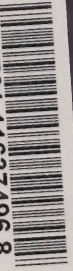


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# FleetSmart PROFILES

## THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH

*Low-Cost Fleet  
Management Solutions  
Achieve Major Results*

The Utilities Services Department of the City of Peterborough operates a fleet of 78 vehicles, including 11 garbage trucks, 13 snowplows and a variety of other service-type vehicles. Over the past 10 years, the department has implemented a number of new fleet management policies and changed the way it does business in an effort to ensure an effective, efficient and affordable operation.



### Unnecessary idling time reduced by more than 70 per cent

As is the case with many fleets, excessive vehicle idling was at one time a serious and costly problem for the City of Peterborough, Ontario. It is not surprising that this issue became the focus of one of the first fleet management initiatives undertaken by the department — establishment of a fleet-wide policy limiting engine idling to only a few minutes at a time for all vehicles.

According to Doug Packman, the department's driver trainer, the problem was addressed primarily through driver education. Idling was made a major and repeated topic of discussion at the department's bimonthly driver safety meetings. As well, stickers were placed in all vehicles reminding drivers to turn their vehicles off when not in use.

The new idling policy, which is monitored by four on-the-road supervisors, has been an unqualified success. "We have been able to drive home the need

service

# opportunity

to reduce idling to our operators," reports Mr. Packman, citing a 70 to 80 per cent reduction in unnecessary idling across the fleet.

"We're strict with our drivers on our idling policy, but we also recognize that sometimes slightly longer idling times are warranted – in colder weather, for example," says Mr. Packman. "This flexibility makes our drivers more willing to adhere to the idling policy in general, and as a consequence, idling infractions are way down."

## Addressing the vehicle maintenance challenge

One of the department's most difficult and longstanding fleet management challenges related to vehicle maintenance. In particular, garbage pick-up vehicles were returning to the city depot with serious maintenance problems on a regular basis.

The department's response to this situation has been threefold. First, its in-house driver training program was strengthened. The program focuses on pre-trip inspections, defensive driving and driving in different weather and traffic conditions, and includes an annual road evaluation of all vehicle operators. Once again, the results have been positive.

"Our operators' driving records have improved a lot," remarks Mr. Packman. "Vehicle repairs are less frequent and the seriousness of our accidents is reduced. Our vehicle accident reporting is more stringent, so driver awareness is improved."

The second step taken by the department was to change the way in which garbage pick-up work was

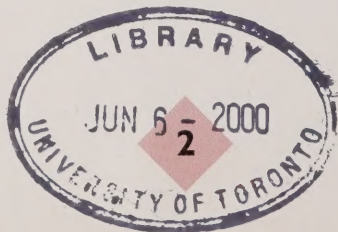
## *Strict maintenance regime*

A strengthened focus on preventive maintenance is another important element of the Utilities Services Department's fleet management program.

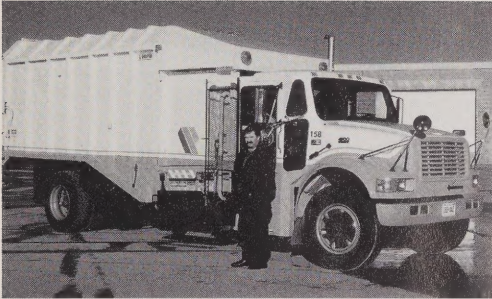
Under the current maintenance policy, every vehicle undergoes a complete servicing based on its usage. Different types of vehicles are inspected and

served at different intervals. For example, the fleet's heavy-duty vehicles are inspected every month and serviced after every 200 hours of operation. Half-ton trucks, on the other hand, are serviced after every 3 000 kilometres.

Although maintenance scheduling is currently done manually, the City of Peterborough







is implementing a new corporate information system that will eventually give the Utilities Services Department the ability to include service scheduling as part of its computerized maintenance program. By automating this daily task, the department will gain even greater control over an important aspect of its fleet operations.

organized. At one time, the city's sanitation staff were paid for a full eight hours of work, regardless of how long it took to complete their assigned routes. This led to a situation where crews were attempting to finish their routes as quickly as possible, resulting in unsafe driving practices and vehicle abuse. In some cases, drivers were completing eight-hour circuits in only four to five hours.

"They had poor driving habits – too fast, blowing clutches and transmissions, and our repair costs were huge," recalls Mr. Packman. "We were using tachographs to monitor speed, braking, engine r.p.m. and idling, but we just weren't getting anywhere."

In 1990, the policy was changed to the effect that sanitation staff are now required to work a full eight-hour shift. "This has slowed everyone down," says Mr. Packman. "Pick-up routes are taking longer to complete, but our safety record has improved and the vehicles are staying in much better shape now. The drivers are performing more preventative maintenance and minor repairs, resulting in lower vehicle operating costs."

The third step taken to minimize vehicle downtime and maintenance costs was to revise the department's

payback

spec'ing of replacement vehicles. Due to the recurring damage to clutches and transmissions and the difficulty experienced in getting drivers to use manual transmissions properly, the department started buying vehicles with automatic transmissions. In fact, the conversion of the fleet to automatic transmissions, which have proven to be much less costly to maintain, is virtually complete.

## **An ongoing process**

These low-cost fleet management initiatives have helped Peterborough's Utilities Services Department cope with high service demands in a time of budget restraint. Departmental supervisors intend to continue to monitor the fleet with a view to identifying additional opportunities to control fuel and maintenance expenses while ensuring efficient and reliable services to the public.



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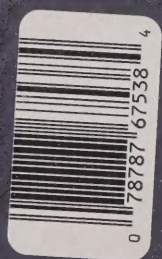
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